Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Business Plan

2005/06

April 1, 2005

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Message from the Minister and the Director & CEO

The business plan for the 2005/06 fiscal year is intended to provide the public with an overview of the major priorities and goals for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission in the coming year.

The Commission is well on its way to completing implementation of the recommendations contained in the consultant's report from its organizational review. The recommendations set out in the consultant's report provided a blueprint for ensuring efficient, effective and transparent service to Nova Scotians. All changes have been completed within the current budget resources of the Commission.

During the 2005/06 fiscal year, the Commission will begin to evaluate the effectiveness of changes to policy and procedure in its core business areas resulting from the organizational review. The guiding principle will continue to be providing the best service possible to Nova Scotians while making efficient use of resources.

The vision of seeing Nova Scotia become a centre of excellence in human rights continues to motivate commissioners, staff and management.

Hon. Michael Baker
Minister Responsible for the N.S. Human Rights Act

Mayann Francis
Director & CEO

A. Mission

To reduce individual and systemic discrimination in support of a society characterized by equality. We value:

Respect and dignity, through words and actions in relation to all members of the public;
Diversity, recognizing everyone can contribute to our society;
Understanding, through education as a focal point for change;
Credibility, in being seen as independent and truly autonomous from government, and;
Integrity, in practicing what we preach and in serving as a model for government, other agencies and the private sector.

B. Planning Context

The Commission currently employs 20 people and has four offices: a central office in Halifax and regional offices in Sydney, Digby and New Glasgow.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") is an independent government agency charged with administering Nova Scotia's *Human Rights Act* (hereinafter referred to as "the *Act*"), a provincial statute created in 1969. Under the authority of the Act, the Commission focuses on two core business functions:

- resolving complaints of discrimination; and
- promoting human rights through education, training and affirmative action programs.

These core businesses operate in the rapidly evolving field of human rights and within a tight fiscal environment. Therefore, the Commission has continued to invest resources in ongoing staff training and seeks partners from the public, private and non-governmental sectors as it delivers its public education and outreach programs.

The Commission's Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has outlined a vision which sees Nova Scotia becoming a centre of excellence in human rights. Government, business, communities and private citizens would be actively engaged in promoting the values of respect and inclusion. Research and study on human rights issues would draw people from around the globe to Nova Scotia. The Commission plays an integral role in achieving this vision.

The Race Relations and Affirmative Action Division focuses on the core business activity of promoting organizational change in the public and private sectors. Since 1999, the Division has implemented a cost-recovery program for its workshops and training services as it continues to focus on organizational change initiatives promoting equity and inclusion. Special training

projects have been undertaken for staff and management with the YMCA of Halifax-Dartmouth, Convergys Customer Management, the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission and the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation. In the year ahead, the Division will continue to expand its reach with additional staff resources and promotion of its activities to outside clients.

In July 2000, the Commission initiated a multi-phase organizational review to look for more efficient and effective ways to provide service to Nova Scotians. Beginning in 2003/04 and continuing during 2004/05, the Commission incorporated the recommendations from the review into its business processes. This included re-examining time lines in the complaint process, updating policies and procedures, development of an online case management system and placing increased emphasis on settlement initiatives.

The focus during 2005/06 will be evaluating the effectiveness of these changes. A variety of tools will be utilized, with feedback from clients forming a major aspect of the evaluation process. Development of staff through ongoing training will continue and limited recruitment based on the development of new job descriptions will be completed in the coming year.

During the 2005/06 fiscal year, the Commission will continue to make the best possible use of its human and financial resources. This will ensure that the needs of Nova Scotians can be effectively met and the vision of Nova Scotia as a centre of excellence in human rights will be one step closer to reality.

C. Strategic Goals

Goals for the Commission in 2005/06 are:

1. Improved service delivery to the public through enhanced partnerships with other organizations and efficient and effective management of program delivery.

2. To promote efficient, effective and timely resolutions to complaints of discrimination.

3. To help foster the development of a more equitable society and fair workplaces by pro-actively addressing discrimination in all its forms.

While the Commission is independent of government, its goals for 2004/05 mirror the spirit of the Provincial Government's goals by seeking to:

- promoting fiscal responsibility and accountability;

- building greater prosperity (N.B. - By enabling all Nova Scotians to participate in the economic and social life of the province.); and
- protecting what Nova Scotians value.

D. Core Businesses

Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination:

- Delivered collaboratively through the Investigation and Compliance and Race Relations and Affirmative Action divisions.
- Attempts settlement initiatives at all stages of the complaint process in accordance with the *Act* and Commission policies.
- Investigates complaints of discrimination (approximately 190 active files in 2004/05) and recommends options for resolution to the Commissioners.
- Identifies emerging issues and targets skill development for Commission staff in response.
- Establishes best practices for addressing systemic discrimination in collaboration with the Coordinator of Race Relations & Affirmative Action.

Promoting Human Rights Through Education, Training and Affirmative Action Programs:

- Raises awareness of human rights issues and encourages peace, harmony and respect among all Nova Scotians.
- Involves the staff of the Race Relations and Affirmative Action and Investigation and Compliance divisions and the Office of the Director and CEO.
- Develops and maintains effective links with government, business, the legal community, schools, agencies and community groups to raise awareness of human rights issues and compliance with the Act.
- Undertakes communication initiatives aimed at increasing the Commission's public profile.
- Fosters social research on human rights issues and topics.
- Provides education and training programs in workplaces, schools and other settings such as a five-day Train-the-Trainer module for workplace educators.
- Ensures cost-recovery in service delivery wherever possible.
- Promotes opportunities for all Nova Scotians by working with employers to develop innovative agreements that promote diversity in hiring and promotion.
- Recognizes positive role models in business and the community who take leadership in promoting diversity.

E. Priorities for 2005/06

Priorities identified by the Commission for 2005/06 are:

Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination

- In cooperation with Mi'kmaq and other aboriginal communities, develop an aboriginal action plan to improve the services the Commission offers to these communities, particularly through the development of effective models of dispute resolution.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Commission's settlement initiative practices and its mediation roster.
- The development of tools to increase the ability to capably resolve complaints of systemic discrimination.
- Ensure that priorities and strategic goals are reflected in performance management targets for staff and management.
- Develop a strategic plan for the Investigation and Compliance Division to ensure ongoing change management and quality control.
- Continue the roll-out and evaluation of the computerized case management system to improve the tracking and quality control of the complaint process.

Promoting Organizational Change Through Education, Training and Affirmative Action Programs:

- Continue involvement with government, institutional and community partners to further develop linkages and forums for discussion and change; this includes oral presentations on trends and concerns to government and opposition caucuses in conjunction with the filing of the Commission's annual report.
- Complete the recruitment process for additional staffing resources for the Race Relations and Affirmative Action Division to augment the Commission's education, training and affirmative action programs.
- Develop a strategic plan for the Race Relations and Affirmative Action Division to leverage an increase in staff resources and ensure major responsibilities continue to be met.
- Continue to host an annual public forum on a protected characteristic in the *Act*, with a focus in 2005 on race.
- Invite faith leaders to join together at Province House for the Commission's fourth "Day of Reflection".

- Promote the value of practicing inclusion to the business community using the Commission's "Champions for the Workplace" program to identify three new champions during 2005/06 to host a breakfast for their colleagues.
- Continue policy research and development in partnership with external organizations in emerging areas of human rights, including undertaking special projects aimed at mental health consumers as specified in the settlement agreement for *Archibald Kaiser v. Executive Council of Nova Scotia*.
- Complete the development and implementation of a Race Relations and Affirmative Action Division module as part of the Commission's computerized case management system.
- Promote the Commission as a source of information and resources on human rights and compliance issues under the Act for employers and employees in the public, private, educational and not-for-profit sectors.

F. Budget Context

See attached Schedule 1.

G. Outcomes and Measures

See attached Schedule 2.

Schedule 1

N.S. Human Rights Commission			
	2004/05 Estimate	2004/05 Forecast	2005/06 Estimate
	$ Thousands	$ Thousands	$ Thousands
Total	$1,764	$1,764	$1,843
Program Expenses	$484.2	$695.6	$520
Funds From Kaiser Settlement*	$30	$30	$30
Salaries & Benefits	$1,249.8	$1,038.4	$1,293
Funded Staff (FTEs)	22	22	23

* Not included in core funds for NSHRC.

Schedule 2

Strategic Goal: ***Improved service delivery to the public through enhanced partnerships with other organizations and efficient and effective management of program delivery.***				
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA 2004/05**	**TARGET 2005/06**	**Strategic Actions to achieve target**
Increase public awareness of and commitment to human rights	Number of representative partners with whom we co-sponsor special events, projects, etc.	PAR (Partners Against Racism) Committee membership - 20	PAR Committee membership - 20	- Ensure regular meetings are held. - Active membership cub-committee. - Survey members to ensure satisfaction. - Develop methods to recognize efforts of committee members.
	Number of participants at events	1000	1500	- Ensure regular public events for Dec. 10th and March 21st are coordinated by Digby and Sydney offices for their regions. - Closer collaboration with Communications Nova Scotia to develop new strategies for promoting public events.

Schedule 2

Strategic Goal: ***Improved service delivery to the public through enhanced partnerships with other organizations and efficient and effective management of program delivery.***				
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA 2004/05**	**TARGET 2005/06**	**Strategic Actions to achieve target**
An efficient complaint handling process	Average time to process complaints from receipt to decision	24 months	12 months	- Monitor using computerized case management system.
	Average time to assess appropriate method to process a complaint	4 weeks	2 weeks	- Review allocation of staff resources for increased efficiency in intake process.

Schedule 2

Strategic Goal: ***Improved service delivery to the public through enhanced partnerships with other organizations and efficient and effective management of program delivery.***				
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA 2004/05**	**TARGET 2006/07**	**Strategic Actions to achieve target**
Service delivery that is timely, accessible and courteous	success rate meeting time standards for processing complaints	50%	70%	- Ongoing monitoring of compliance with standards - Establish targets for compliance through performance management
	satisfaction rate of parties who receive service at NSHRC	N/A	75%	- Set standards for timely and continuous communication with parties to complaints - Establish individualized training plans for each staff member through annual performance management

Schedule 2

Strategic Goal: ***To promote efficient, effective and timely resolutions to complaints of discrimination.***				
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA 2004/05**	**TARGET 2005/06**	**Strategic Actions to achieve target**
Effective settlement initiatives which resolve individual allegations and reflect the public interest.	Success rate of cases which proceed to mediation	70%	75%	- Train staff to effectively identify cases appropriate for mediation - Evaluate settlement initiatives through feedback from participants - Training and development opportunities for members of the mediation roster to enhance understanding of human rights principles

Schedule 2

Strategic Goal: ***To help foster the development of a more equitable society and fair workplaces by pro-actively addressing discrimination in all its forms.***				
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA 2004/05**	**TARGET 2005/06**	**Strategic Actions to achieve target**
NSHRC seen as an expert in the fields of equity and managing inclusion	Increase the number of public information sessions	63 Consults 25 Training sessions 19 Education sessions 60 requests for education sessions and resources	66 Consults 26 Training sessions 24 Education sessions 63 requests education sessions and resources	- Develop communications plan for marketing training services. - Augment the educational segments of the NSHRC website - Network with prospective clients - Plan and host a public forum on race - Host the fourth annual "Day of Reflection" at Province House
	Number of positive evaluations from participants	75%	80%	- review resources and professional journals to ensure facilitation and materials are state-of-the-art - survey past participants to determine long term impacts of training programs

Schedule 2

Strategic Goal: ***To help foster the development of a more equitable society and fair workplaces by pro-actively addressing discrimination in all its forms.***				
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA 2004/05**	**TARGET 2005/06**	**Strategic Actions to achieve target**
Public and private sector commitment to the values of Affirmative Action	Increase in the number of new Affirmative Action agreements	0	2 (to total of 21)	- Market Affirmative Action consulting services to public and private sector organizations - Profile successful Affirmative Action agreements
	Increase the number of "Champions for the Workplace" breakfasts	2	3	- Develop a brochure to promote the initiative to businesses - Create a communication plan to achieve better media coverage - Improve linkages with local Chambers of Commerce
	Success rate renewing Affirmative Action agreements within the 5 year standard	N/A	30 %	- Develop a schedule for renewing Affirmative Action agreements - Implement the Race Relations/Affirmative Action module of computerized case management system